



Other Viewpoints

Even in hard times, Kansas needs roads

Reluctance on the part of many legislators to embark upon a new state transportation plan while they're struggling to balance expenditures and declining revenues is understandable.

The country is in a recession that shows no signs of relenting in Kansas or across the Midwest, despite cautiously optimistic reports from some corners that the worst is behind us.

Many Kansans have lost their jobs over the past two years, and they weren't fond of tax increases when they had jobs.

And government, overall, isn't held in high regard by a lot of people these days, particularly when it comes to spending money.

This is why we step gingerly into the debate on whether the time is right for another transportation construction program that will require raising the tax on gasoline and diesel fuel, increasing vehicle registration fees and issuing bonds — none of which will detract from the state programs that rely on income and general sales tax revenues.

Legislators approved the state's first 10-year transportation program in 1989 and a second in 1999, which is in its final stages. Few would point to the state's highways and suggest they aren't in much better shape than they were 20 years ago — in terms of surface condition and additional interchanges, overpasses, bridges and lanes.

Anyone who thinks the money wasn't well spent should drive east into Missouri or west into Colorado. Motorists headed in those directions don't get far before realizing they've left the smooth highways of Kansas behind them....

All that said, we think the time may well be right for another highway program, although we aren't adamant that it be a 10-year gig or as broad in scope as its predecessors.

Something that includes a specific number of targeted projects with the potential to put a lot of people back to work relatively quickly will do quite nicely.

— Topeka Capital-Journal, via The Associated Press

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U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715 or Fax (202) 225-5124

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Columbus started globalization

On Monday, our country celebrated Columbus Day in honor of Christopher Columbus' "discovery" of the new world.

I will admit that I'm sure their have been a lot of slave holders and tyrants who were also courageous men with tremendous work ethics. Should these men also had a day named in their honor?

I'm also concerned that the darker side of Columbus has never been fully rejected by those who traditionally hold power in the world. It seems to me that the ghost of Columbus lives on today through a process called globalization.

The system of thought that guided Columbus' crew is eerily similar to the thought patterns of today's promoters of corporate-driven globalization. The conventional wisdom among both groups was that they were morally and intellectually superior to people whose belief systems and culture differed from their own.

Critics of today's global economy and of free-market fundamentalism in general have been labeled the anti-globalization movement. In the media, they are routinely depicted as protectionists, environmental extremists, Luddites, anarchists, backwards, politically correct and elitists. In this country they are also regularly accused being anti-American.

I don't doubt some of the people making these criticisms are sincere in their beliefs and I also wouldn't be surprised if some of the men from Columbus' crew truly thought



Andy Heintz

• Wildcat Ramblings

it was okay to turn teenage Taino Indian girls into personal slaves.

Columbus wrote to a friend in 1500: "a hundred castellanos (a Spanish coin) are as easily obtained for a woman as for a farm, and it is very general and there are plenty of dealers who go about looking for girls; those from 9 to 10 years old are now in demand."

In today's world, indigenous people have plenty of company when it comes to being repressed. They share the same fate as small farmers, landless peasants and blue-collar workers. These are the people who don't get a seat at the table when important decisions are made concerning the global economy. Many of these people have resisted and some have achieved great success.

The current governments in Brazil, El Salvador, Ecuador and Bolivia are the end results of grassroots movements that challenged the multinational companies, foreign powers and military establishments that had successfully kept the majority of their countries' citizens poor while the wealth remained in the hands of an elite few. The triumphs of these movements have been similar to the triumphs of the brave men and women who participated in the civil rights, women's, labor, environmental and populist movements in the United States years ago.

The assumptions made by the supporters of globalization here reflect a profound mis-

understanding of the views of their detractors. Many of them have also fallen prey to the same temptations that Columbus and company fell for. Their narrow-minded views have left them unable to believe that people may have legitimate reasons to oppose their way of thinking.

In other words, they are not mentally inferior or anti-progress, they just view progress in a different light. We should reflect on the fact that many people view indigenous people today as backward even though they have been able to make a living leading a sustainable life without using an excess of natural resources. Isn't that something we should all aspire to do?

I wish I could say I have lived a life with the same respect for the environment shown by indigenous people throughout the world. In many ways I think my lifestyle is much more backwards than theirs.

Miguel Cueno, a crew member on Columbus' ship, described when the local villagers who had come out to greet their arrival were taken captive. Cueno wrote: "When our caravels ... were to leave for Spain, we gathered ... one thousand six hundred male and female persons of those Indians and we embarked in our caravels on Feb. 17, 1495, ... for those who remained, we let it be known (to the Spaniards who manned the island's fort) in the vicinity that anyone who wanted to take some of them could do so, to the amount desired, which was done."

This was the way globalization began. Let's make sure its not the way it ends.

Andy Heintz, a K-State journalism graduate, is sports reporter for the Colby Free Press. He says he loves K-State athletics and fishing, sports and opinion writing.

End-of-life counseling important for all

The hullabaloo that was raised by radical opponents of the health care bill provision that called for "end-of-life counseling" just doesn't resonate with the reality of how society looks at the sanctity of life.

In an article I just read in the *Miami Herald*, James H. Burnett III comments on the difficulty in raising an \$11,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the murderer of a couple college students. But, apparently, in the same time period they had to plead for people to stop donating to a reward fund for information leading to the arrest of the butcher who had slaughtered some horses. That fund had reached \$80,000.

What does that say about sanctity of life? We have a large and influential group of people who seem to be far more concerned about the welfare of animals than they are the welfare of human beings. They are far more concerned about the welfare and treatment of domestic livestock, from birth to death, than they are the welfare of the human work force involved in the food chain. They have, sometimes, unreasonable demands on the resources available to meet their criteria. Where is the demand for resources to meet the welfare of humanity?

Is counseling the real issue or was it just a



Ken Poland

• Ken's World

hot button that would sway opinions? Somehow we have confused health-decision counseling, especially end-of-life counseling, with euthanasia.

Just how much should I expect the system to spend on trying to postpone my inevitable death, even if I have paid my insurance premiums faithfully for years? Should I or my family demand that society spend thousands of dollars just to extend my life for two weeks, a month or a year?

Just how much authority should someone, other than myself, have in deciding whether I want to merely exist beyond consciousness of my surroundings? Legal documents are available for me to record my wishes concerning my own health care, and to authorize someone to make those decisions for me, if I am unable.

Is it wrong to explain those documents and help someone determine the consequences of not having them done? That counseling should also include information on what happens to dependent children and where and how our material possessions are distributed or disposed of.

Are we afraid to face the reality of death? Are we afraid of Big Government? Unless you have those documents, government will decide all those issues by law, without regard to individual circumstances.

Some religionists equate "pulling the plug" with man playing God. Hmmm — who played God when the plug was put in?

Does the military system address the issue and train the medics and doctors on how to evaluate conditions on the battle field for triage? Do we or should we accuse them of playing God?

Good questions, all.

Ken Poland describes himself as a semiretired farmer living north of Gem, a Christian, affiliated with American Baptist Churches, and a radical believer in separation of church and state. Contact him at rcwinc@cheerful.com.

Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

